

The House of Representatives today approved an amendment to the Higher Education Act authored by Oregon Congressmen Earl Blumenauer and David Wu along with their colleague Vern Ehlers (R-Mich.), directing the U.S. Secretary of Education to convene a summit of higher education experts on sustainability. The amendment was inspired by Portland State University's leadership in the area of sustainability.

"If America is to be competitive in the 21st century economy, it must become a leader in sustainable practices, processes, and products," said Blumenauer. "This amendment creates a National Summit on Sustainability to highlight the growing body of academic research and development in sustainability and to strengthen our universities' contributions to our economic growth."

"The American people want the federal government to take a leadership role in reducing the use of environmentally harmful fossil fuels and our dependence on foreign oil," stated Congressman David Wu, a member, along with Congressman Ehlers, of the House Education and the Workforce Committee. "Today Congressman Blumenauer, Ehlers and I have done just that. Our amendment will encourage colleges and universities, like Portland State University in my district, to educate the next generation of scientists, engineers, planners, and business professionals to help in the development of new tools and strategies for environmental and resource conservation, energy efficiency and more sustainable development."

"Whether it is operating green buildings or incorporating environmental, economic, and social sustainability into our curriculum, I am pleased that Portland State University faculty, staff, and students are leading the way on this crucial world issue," said Daniel O. Bernstine, president of Portland State University. "The amendment advanced today by Congressmen Blumenauer, Ehlers, and Wu brings national attention to the role that higher education institutions must play in developing sustainability operations and programs. Portland State University stands ready to work with the Secretary of Education, business leaders, and federal agency leaders on the summit on sustainability. This is an official invitation for the Secretary to hold the summit in Portland, Oregon, the nation's most advanced sustainability laboratory."

Sustainable development practices are being advanced by hundreds of U.S. companies, cities and government agencies through a variety of international agencies. Educating and training the next generation of scientists, engineers, environmental managers, planners and business professionals can help in the development of new tools and strategies for

environmental enhancement and resource conservation, energy efficiency and more sustainable development.

Portland State University has a unique professional certificate program for those in the field of sustainability and a graduate certificate program in sustainability has been added to PSU's curriculum to make students competitive in the current job market. Collaborative research initiatives with business and government that address pressing development issues are also underway. The University is currently working across the campus to conserve energy, replacing light fixtures, installing low-flow water systems and harvesting rainwater to be used in the restrooms. PSU's efforts to construct "green" buildings and to use smart technology for energy and water use are expected to save \$275,000 annually- the equivalent of tuition costs for 80 students. PSU was awarded two Portland 'Best' awards for its innovative alternative transportation program and stormwater management in green buildings.

The lawmakers' amendment was approved as part of the Higher Education Act, legislation the House of Representatives is expected to approve tomorrow, March 30th. The legislation must then be approved by the United States Senate.